

Regatta 101

Everything a new parent needs to know about high school sailing regattas!

As your high school sailors go through a term, they will learn skills ranging from basic/intermediate skills to advanced racing techniques. The goal is to prepare them to participate in inter-school competitions, called regattas. Since regattas are often out of town and involve overnight stays, we depend on our parent volunteers to serve as drivers and chaperones. For those of you who are new to all this, we've prepared this list of FAQs to try and answer most of your questions.

What is a regatta?

A regatta is simply a series of short sailboat races, typically anywhere from 5 to 20. It is either one or two days long and held on a weekend. High school sailors compete as 4-person teams, with one 2-person crew sailing in the A division and one 2-person crew sailing in the B division. Racing alternates between A and B divisions, with sailors swapping boats between races. The scores of both divisions are added together to determine the team's ranking in the final results.

Who gets to sail in the regatta?

We encourage all our sailors to participate in regattas. Typically, the more experienced sailors serve as skippers and the less experienced sailors serve as crews. At formal events (i.e., district championships), all four team members must be from the same school. But for most of the regattas we will be attending, this is not a requirement, and we will be mixing sailors from different schools to make our teams. Final team assignments are made by the coaches prior to each regatta.

When are the regattas held?

Most high school regattas take place in the spring. They are held on weekends at predetermined times and locations (see *High School Regatta Schedule*). An organization called the Northwest Interscholastic Sailing Association (NWISSA) determines locations and dates for all high school races in the northwest.

Where are the regattas held?

Regattas for high school sailors in the northwest can be held as far south as Eugene and as far north as the San Juan Islands. They typically take place in the Seattle, Portland, and Kitsap Peninsula areas.

Who provides the boats?

Sometimes boats are provided by the hosting organization. Sometimes we bring our own boats. If we are bringing our own boats, we need to bring one boat for each team that will be competing in the regatta.

How do we get to the regattas?

We drive in private cars with parent drivers. The WSC High School Sailing program has developed a Regatta Travel Policy that covers our guidelines and responsibilities in some detail (see *Regatta Travel Policy*).

Where do we stay?

Sailors usually stay with a host family or in other lodgings arranged by the hosting organization. Parents usually have the option of staying with the kids or finding other accommodations on their own. When the regatta is in Portland, local families will host out of town families.

What are the parent responsibilities at a regatta?

It's the job of the adult chaperones to assist and oversee the teams as they travel. This includes driving, managing the necessary forms and documentation, getting the sailors from their overnight lodgings to the regatta site on time, providing support as needed during the racing, and supervising après race activities. Parents are responsible for making sure all members of our team conform to the WSC High School Sailing Program Code of Conduct and behave at all times with courtesy and respect to everyone they meet.

What do we do while the kids are sailing?

Bring a book and chair, binoculars, camera, umbrella, raincoat and hat. Be ready to help cold, wet kids coming off the water with a blanket, a change of clothes, or a warm drink. Enjoy the racing and don't hesitate to ask the coaches questions if you want to learn more, but please don't tell them how to do their jobs (this isn't Little League!).

Where do I get specific information about a regatta?

Specific regatta instructions—including times, locations, racing guidelines, housing arrangements, social events, etc.—are published in a Notice of Race issued by the NWISSA or hosting organization before the event. This document will be posted on our website (link under Regatta Schedule) when it is received, or you can get a copy from the coaches or Parent Volunteer Coordinator.

Here's a typical regatta scenario:

- *Friday evening:* Meet at WSC to load boats (if necessary) and gear, check in with other volunteers and review plans; drive to regatta location; settle kids into host family homes.
- *Saturday morning:* Get to the regatta site early for registration, rigging of boats (kids do this) and skippers meeting; first race typically starts around noon; racing continues until 4ish or until wind poops out.
- *Saturday evening:* Usually a hosted dinner for all participants, then home to bed or supervised activities for the kids (but not too late!).
- *Sunday:* Racing starts early (10ish) and usually ends by 3 pm, followed by packing up the boats, awards presentation (stay for this!), then hit the road for home.

Where can I get more information?

Regatta schedule, current announcements, travel policies, parent volunteer guidelines, forms, and contact names and numbers can be found on the WSC High School Sailing website at <http://www.willamettesailingclub.com/highschool/index.html>.